

Columbia MD Family History Center

Temple and Family History Consultant

In-service Training Letter, Nov 2017

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TEAMVIEWER

For when you want to be able to help people “while in your bunny slippers,” the Church is emphasizing the use of a free web service, TeamViewer. As a Consultant, you get started by downloading the program (see the write up on our wiki page at URL

https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Columbia_Maryland_Family_History_Center, then in the table of contents, click on 5.2 and read article 1. “Team Viewer Instructions”).

When you want to help someone else, have them follow the same instructions for the download to their computer. Then ask the patron to start the program and share their 9-digit TeamViewer ID and the TeamViewer password visible on their screen. When their TeamViewer talks to yours, you will be able to see and control their computer. You will talk to the patron over the telephone.

As little as possible, take control by clicking. Instead, explain what they should do and point the mouse to the point of interest, and then have them take the action so that they learn what to do under your guidance. In this way patrons can show you what they are seeing and you can help them directly.

The Family History Department is currently asking all consultants to get onto TeamViewer and start helping patrons as a normal way of performing their calling. The directors and lead consultants will be checking with you to help you become comfortable with TeamViewer. You may want to make your first TeamViewer contact with a friend (perhaps another consultant) to make the learning less daunting.

Remember, no one knows all the answers. If you get “stumped,” be willing to say that you will find the answer and get back to the patron.

For example, your Family History Center Directors are “frequent fliers” with the help line in Salt Lake (1-866-406-1830). If too many people start calling the helpline, the Family History Department will arrange for more missionaries to handle the workload. Our stake goals include helping more people work on their family history and submit names to the temple. Consultants are key players in the fulfillment of that goal. TeamViewer is a key resource in your toolkit for helping people.

Riverton

The Riverton Utah FamilySearch Library is more than a Family History Center. It is a center of excellence for the entire FamilySearch portion of the Family History Department of the church. Of special interest to Temple and Family History Consultants is their “Tip of the Week” on a wide range of topics. Ask for a free subscription at:

ut_rivfslibrary3 <ut_rivfslibrary3@ldschurch.org>

Yippy.com

This incredible website was a Riverton Tip of the Week. It is a “data clustering” “metasearch engine” (see the wikipedia article at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yippy>). With the power of Yippy.com, people no longer need to cross their fingers while doing a “Google” search. For the beginner, by putting in the name of a parent or grandparent and a good guess as to their birth year and place, a world of genealogy sites with information about that person unfolds. So, please include Yippy.com in your training of new converts and other people with limited information about their family.

The typical problem for beginners is to find records in the gap between the present and the 1940 US Census, what used to seem like the beginning of on-line records. Yippy.com can often fill that gap. Even the seasoned researcher may find new sources of information using this gift from the Carnegie Mellon University.

1900 US Census

This is the only US Census that provides the birth month and year (the others provide only the age, which gives varying levels of accuracy depending when the enumerator found the family during a given census year). If the person had a birthday before the visit his calculated birth year is good, but if the birthday came after the visit, the calculated birth year will be off by one (provided there was no error on the part of the person providing the information nor on the part of the census taker). Frequent “errors” of this nature is why FamilySearch has +/- 2 years built into its birth years in queries.

Getting the exact birth month and year is one good reason to include all census records for which the person was alive in your searches. It may be worth your time to visit each of the members of your family who were in the US in 1900, to make sure that this source of valuable information has been exploited where a birth record has not provided the exact date of birth.

“Trolling” for Hints

There is a program that compares the information in your portion of FamilySearch Family Tree against the indexed historical records in FamilySearch. The result of a “find” where a record seems to match the information in Family Tree is called a hint. It is a “robot’s” guess and is right about 95% of the time (or about 19 times out of 20). Hints appear at the top of the right-hand column in the so-called details page of each person in the Family Tree. As a researcher compares the information in the record (in the left-hand column of the comparison page) with the information in Family Tree (in the right-hand column), and determines that the record does indeed pertain to the family, the hint is transformed into an evaluated source record and added to the “Sources” area of every person you attach the source record to. This comparison page is one of the great strengths of FamilySearch. It can, for example, allow the researcher to attach a census record to every member of the family mentioned in the census--a powerful feature that saves time and effort.

However, the program cannot work with a blank field. Rather than leave a birth year and birthplace blank, the recommendation is to fill in an educated guess and an explanation about how the estimate was derived. For example, fill in “about 1850” and “Georgia, United States” with the explanation “Estimate is based on the birth year and place of his oldest daughter, Anna.” An estimate of the proper decade and state gives the comparison program enough to work with so that it can make some “robot’s” guesses and give you hints. Occasionally a hint will appear in the Research Help box as soon as the save key is hit. Usually it takes a while, but even so, “trolling” for a hint by using estimates is a powerful way of finding information.

Moreover, once a researcher has entered estimates, there is no need to wait for hints. By launching searches in FamilySearch or one of its partners (in the colorful “Search Records” box), the estimates are populated into the search engines and often produce good finds. When this technique bears fruit, be sure to transcribe the newly-found information into the “Vital Information” area of the details page.

Then return to the search records box, and armed with the specific information, you should get even better search results than with the estimates.